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THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A method for delivering short-time duration video segments in a multiplexed transport stream to terminals via a communications network, the method comprising:

receiving from a terminal a request for a video segment corresponding to a selected object;

processing the request at a session manager; and

transmitting a control message from the session manager to a transport stream generator, said control message indicating whether one of the oldest transport streams of said multiplexed transport stream may be discontinued by said transport stream generator to release bandwidth, said transport stream generator maintaining status of streams being served, and transmitting said video segment if sufficient bandwidth is available, said transmitted video segment adapted for presentation at said requesting terminal and including a beginning portion of said video segment.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the video segments are delivered as part of an interactive program guide.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the communications network comprises a cable distribution network.

4. (Currently amended) The method of claim 3, wherein a headend of the cable distribution network includes the session manager.

5. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

composing a video sequence incorporating the video segment in a window smaller than and overlaying a screen; and

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encoding a video sequence,

where said transmission of the video segment comprises transmission of the video sequence incorporating the video segment.

6. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein said transmission of the video segment includes inserting a demand-cast video stream incorporating the video segment into a multiplexed transport stream to be delivered to the requesting terminal.

7. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

~~transmission~~transmitting from the requesting terminal to the session manager, ~~of~~a release message when the terminal is no longer presenting the video segment.

8. (Currently amended) The method of claim 7, further comprising:

~~tracking,~~ by the session manager, ~~of~~video segments currently being acquired by at least one terminal.

9. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein a plurality of video segments are transmitted from the transport stream generator to a plurality of terminals, wherein a data structure for representing the plurality of video segments includes a plurality of streams, and wherein each stream comprises a group of pictures (GOP) having a first picture and one or more remaining pictures.

10. (Original) The method of claim 9, wherein the data structure comprises:

a first set of one or more elements for representing data for the first pictures in the plurality of GOPs, wherein each of at least one element in the first set represents data for at least a portion of the first picture of a respective GOP encoded as a reference I picture, and wherein each of remaining elements in the first set represents data for at least a portion of the first picture of a respective remaining GOP encoded as either a difference picture or a P picture; and

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a second set of one or more elements for representing data for the one or more remaining pictures in the plurality of GOPs, wherein each element in the second set represents data for at least a portion of a particular remaining picture in one of the plurality of GOPs encoded as either a P picture or a B picture, and

wherein each of the plurality of streams is represented by one or more elements in the first set and one or more elements in the second set.

11. (Original) The method of claim 10, wherein each video segment occupies at least a portion of the GOP that includes the video segment.

12. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein the first picture for each of the plurality of GOPs having an unduplicated video sequence is encoded as a reference I picture.

13. (Previously presented) The method of claim 11, wherein each picture of the plurality of GOPs includes

a first portion indicative of textual information, and
a second portion indicative of video information.

14. (Original) The method of claim 13, wherein the first and remaining pictures in the plurality of GOPs share a common first portion.

15. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the multiplexed transport stream further comprises transport streams that are acquired by one or more terminals and transport streams that are released by one or more terminals.

16. (Previously presented) The method of claim 15 wherein one of the oldest transport streams is selected from the released transport streams.

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